

CASTRO'S REVOLUTIONARY CABINET



INSIDE THE
CUBAN REVOLUTION
FIDEL CASTRO

STUDY GUIDE



LUMUN21



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LUMUN 21



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THE LUMUN SPIRIT

The LUMUN Spirit was first introduced as a concept at LUMUN XV. It sought to reintroduce a recognition of the most essential components of MUN culture; imparting a sense of responsibility accepting that the onus is on us to be the forerunners of change. The fundamental premise of a Model UN is to develop our understanding of the issues and conflicts in the world as a collective, and to connect individuals with vastly differing life experiences with each other. The pursuit of quantitative success and accolades has fermented a tradition of MUN being a space mired in hostility and distrust. The LUMUN Spirit is our continuing effort to inculcate empathy, compassion, understanding and diplomacy within this competitive activity.

As we proceed on our journey of revamping Model UN, the LUMUN Spirit is an idea that we aspire to incorporate in the entire LUMUN experience: from the Host Team, to an expectation that we will have from the delegates as well. It is not an abstract concept – it is a vision that should embody the behavior of every delegate in every committee. Inside the committee or out; the enthusiasm to meet other people, present arguments in a true ambassadorial manner and the idea to enjoy LUMUN should never be forgotten. In this very essence we will be able to represent what it means to simulate a true world model; an actual representation of the United Nations. We continue to strive and ensure that the outlook of LUMUN XVIII is to not be an average Model UN conference anymore.

And so, leadership and prowess within a committee is not characterized by exerting one's overbearing presence on others or by alienating and excluding others from discussion. They manifest in a delegate's ability to engage with others, help them play their part in the committee, and to facilitate the committee as a whole to engage in a fruitful and informative debate. This includes actions as simple as maintaining a moderate temperament, inviting others' input and operating with honesty and respect. The LUMUN Society invites you to understand what it means to be an ambassador of a country and represent its foreign policy means to employ collaboration alongside reasoned argumentation to press forward with that actor's policy agenda.



LUMUN21

Secretary General



Laiba Noor Abid

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of our Secretariat and Staff, it is with great joy and immense pride that I extend a heartfelt invitation to you for the 21st edition of LUMS Model United Nations (LUMUN). This milestone marks not only a continued legacy of excellence in diplomacy at LUMS but extends beyond! It is both an honor and a privilege to carry forward this tradition of global engagement in collaboration with Oxford University this year.

At LUMUN, we believe in the power of dialogue. For just over two decades, each year young minds have come together to tackle issues of global and contemporary importance. In the process, they learn how to face adversity and difference while celebrating the spirit of negotiation and collaboration. These five days serve as a platform for utilizing real-world knowledge to craft actionable and feasible policy proposals.

But LUMUN is so much more than just a forum for intellectual exchange; it is a community where lasting connections are forged! Now more than ever, as we diversify and internationalise the LUMUN community, we hope to facilitate bonds and create treasured moments for delegates to carry as souvenirs far beyond the conference days. Staffed by over 200 members, our team is dedicated to ensuring that delegates feel welcomed to the vibrant city of Lahore and enjoy a wide array of engaging social and recreational activities, outside their committee rooms.

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With a diverse range of committees – from General Assemblies to Specialized Agencies, Regional Bodies, and the Economic and Social Councils – there is something for everyone at LUMUN. Whether you are new to Model United Nations or a seasoned delegate, you will find a platform that perfectly aligns with your interests.

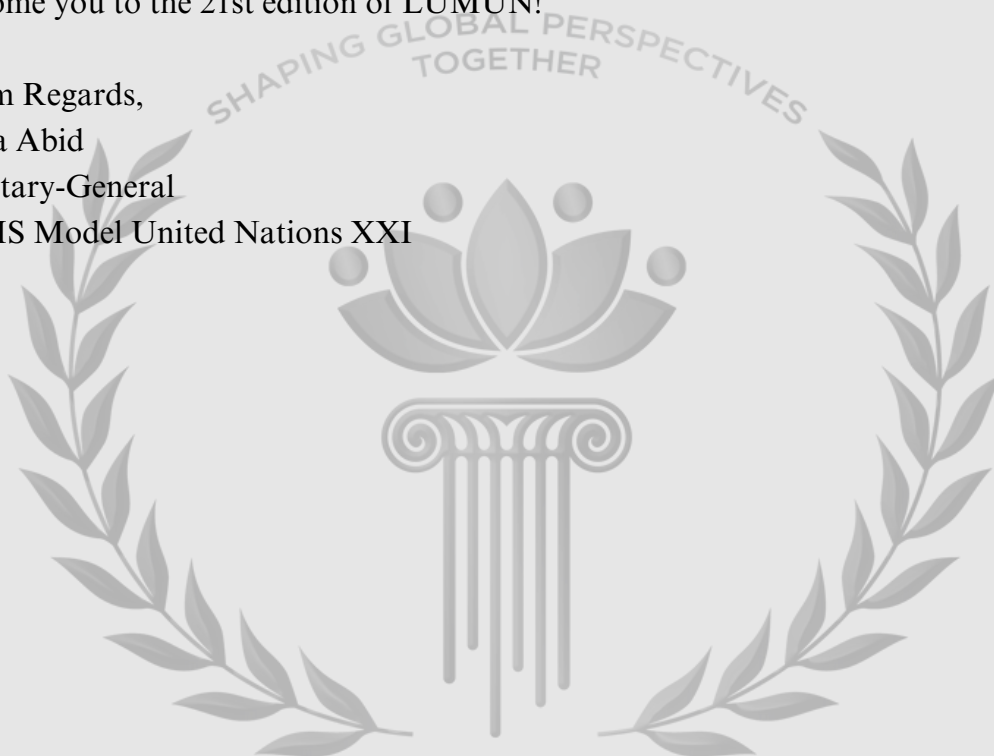
As we celebrate and expand our ongoing legacy of quality debate, we are committed to making this year's LUMUN more memorable than ever. The Staff and I are thrilled to welcome you to the 21st edition of LUMUN!

Warm Regards,

Laiba Abid

Secretary-General

LUMS Model United Nations XXI



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Under Secretary General



Muhammad Shazil Nadeem

Dear Delegates,

It is with great honor and excitement that I welcome you to the 21st edition of LUMUN. As we embark on this journey of diplomacy, debate, and discovery, I am thrilled to serve as your Under-Secretary-General for the Crisis Committees. This year's conference promises to challenge your perspectives, ignite your critical thinking, and foster a deeper understanding of global issues.

My name is Muhammad Shazil Nadeem, and I am currently a CS sophomore at Syed Babar Ali School of Science and Engineering at LUMS. Last year, I had the privilege of serving as the Assistant Committee Director (ACD) for UNHCR at LUMUN 20, an experience that deepened my appreciation for the art of diplomacy and the unique intellectual rigor that Model United Nations conferences bring. Apart from being a huge Eminem Stan, I am a golf enthusiast, although SSE makes sure I barely get the time to play. I have also recently ventured into Fantasy Premier League which by the way is going great (read: terrible).

The Crisis Committees at LUMUN are renowned for their intensity, creativity, and unpredictability. Over the course of the conference, you will be tasked with making swift yet strategic decisions, mastering the art of negotiation, and demonstrating adaptability under pressure. While this may seem daunting at first, remember that growth often comes from stepping out of your comfort zone. Embrace the challenges, engage actively,



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and let this experience shape your journey as a delegate.

At LUMUN, we believe that diplomacy extends beyond committee sessions. Take the opportunity to form meaningful connections, share ideas with peers, and immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere of the conference. Whether through passionate debate, collaborative drafting, or moments shared at the socials, this event is as much about personal growth as it is about intellectual engagement.

The entire team at LUMUN is dedicated to ensuring that these four days are both enriching and enjoyable for you. I look forward to seeing the innovative solutions, dynamic debates, and impactful resolutions that you, as future leaders, will bring to the table. Before concluding, I urge you to make the most of this conference—form new connections, join in the socials, and embrace the unique opportunities it offers. These experiences are what truly make LUMUN unforgettable.

Wishing you the very best of luck!

Warm regards,
Muhammad Shazil Nadeem
Under-Secretary-General | Crisis Committees
LUMUN XXI

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Committee Director



Naheel Malik

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 21st edition of the LUMUN Conference! My name is Naheel Malik, and I'll be serving as the chair for Castro's Revolutionary Cabinet this year.

A little bit about me: I am a third-year majoring in Economics and Mathematics here at LUMS. I am LUMUN's (second) biggest Formula 1 fan and a football fan (ManUtd's time is coming). I am also an avid reader, and particularly enjoy reading and writing in the fantasy fiction genre (the Game of Thrones books are amazing). I really love fried chicken (OPTP is the greatest fast food restaurant in the world) and one of my favourite hobbies is travelling. I am a big fan of Bayaan and Kendrick (truly a great year for me) and I love watching sitcoms (no better show than Modern Family).

I've been a part of the MUN circuit for a better part of a decade (feels crazy to type that). I've participated in international conferences such as the Montreal United Nations Conference, HarvardMUN Boston, and others. My accomplishments in Crisis include winning awards at (or coaching delegates for) crisis committees at every major Pakistani MUN including LUMUN. I have ACD'ed for UNSC at LUMUN XIX, chaired UNSC at LAMUN XVIII and chaired Pakistan's first ever Ad Hoc committee at LUMUN XX. I am also a part of LUMUN's Travelling Team to WorldMUN this year.

I expect wit, cunning and strategic brilliance from the best crisis delegates Pakistan has to offer. As someone before me once said, Crisis is about having to "outwit, outplay and



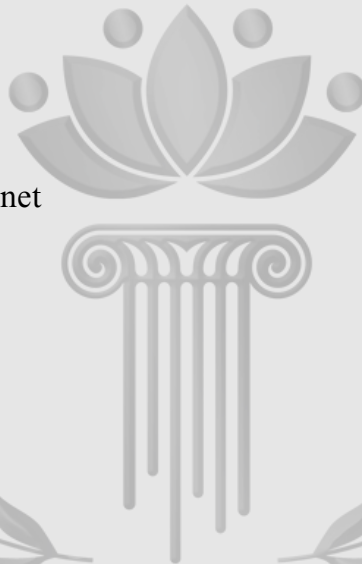
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outlast” the competition.

After an (excessively) long career with Crisis, this committee will be my swan song. As such, this committee and this topic is very special to me. As my farewell letter to an activity that has been very important to me, I have a lot of exciting things planned for this coming December. However, at the same time I have very high expectations from all of you that are choosing to do this committee. I hope you all cannot just meet, but exceed my high expectations for you.

I truly cannot wait to welcome you all to what I’m sure will be an unforgettable experience this winter at LUMUN XXI!

Best,
Naheel Malik
Chair | Crisis Director
Castro’s Revolutionary Cabinet
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Committee Director



Yumna Javed

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Castro's Revolutionary Cabinet! My name is Yumna Javed, and I will serve as one of your directors for this exhilarating crisis committee at LUMUN XXI.

I am a sophomore-year student at the Syed Babar Ali School of Science and Engineering, majoring in Computer Science. When I was not frenzied by some atrocious lecture, I indulge in chronically online shenanigans or bully my friends and vice-versa. I really love reading, especially YA Fantasy (City of Brass trilogy ftw). I love to engage in Bollywood movie discourse, and you can also find me practically vibing with any Bollywood song ever. I am also sort of an adrenaline junkie; you can practically make me sign up for anything that can be a stupid idea (this happens too frequently in the mountains). My current fixation is creating small console games with whatever expertise some of my coding has to offer (I hope this lasts).

My MUN journey trails back to O'level, where I tried to get into public speaking, but unfortunately, the quarantine happened. Later, I participated in several conferences in the Lahore circuit and some international conferences, courtesy of Zoom. And in the last few years, I have participated in some of the most prominent conferences, including LUMUN. I started out as a delegate in UNSC, and for the better part of this journey, I have done UNSC crises. To sum it up, my bar for the debate is quite high in both crisis and conventional debate aspects.

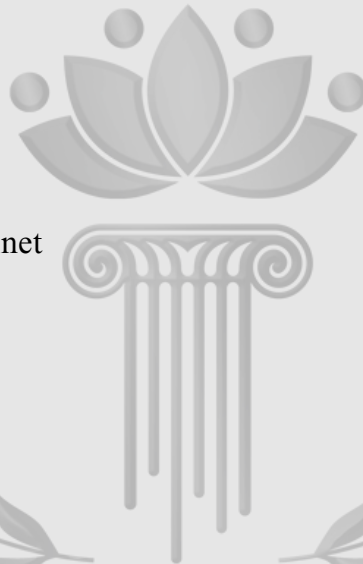


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This year, the crisis committee has a very interesting topic, which will allow all delegates to perform to the best of their abilities. You must be smart, cunning, and, most importantly, a quick thinker. The crisis will be very invigorating, and I'm sure you'll enjoy it. With the best delegates coming here, I hope that we will see innovative ideas and bold strategies. I look forward to seeing how you all navigate the complexities of revolutionary politics and power. Remember, this is a space where creativity, wit, and the ability to adapt will be your greatest assets. I hope you exceed my expectations.

With that, I look forward to meeting you all in December and witnessing all that crisis has to offer this year! It might be daunting, but I hope you have a good learning and fun experience from it. Feel free to reach out for any questions. Good luck with your preparation!!

Best regards,
Yumna Javed
Chair | Crisis Director
Castro's Revolutionary Cabinet
LUMUN XXI



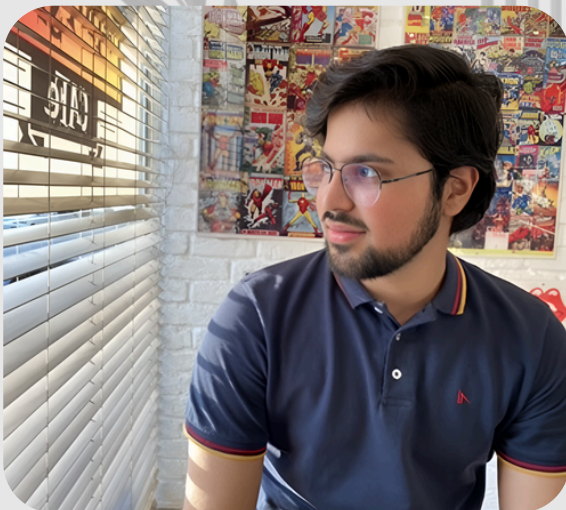
Assistant Committee Directors



Suhaima Jawad



Aayze Razzaq



Khizar Imran



Maham Sajjad



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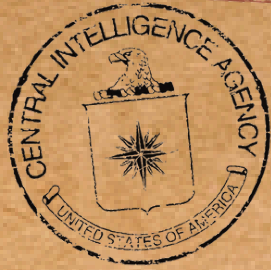
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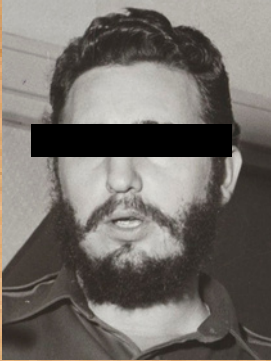
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TOP SECRET



C.I.A.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Fidel Castro is still the undisputed "maximum leader" of the Cuban revolution and the dominant [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] be- coming a pervasive influence in Cuban life. The struggle since 1959 between the so-called [REDACTED] lies dormant--Castro and his sup- porters are in full control.

The military establishment, well equipped and capable of defending Cuba against anything but a large-scale, US-supported attack from abroad, is staunchly loyal to Batista.

[REDACTED] has ceased to be a serious problem.



The Cuban economy, hampered by a combination of mismanagement, natural disasters, and a dearth of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is inadequate, some foods are rationed, and many consumer commodities are difficult or impossible to obtain, but the Cuban people are far from starva- tion [REDACTED]

Notes from the Director
Naheel Malik

This committee will function as an incredibly fast-paced, rolling crisis committee. As a historical crisis, this will be a committee rooted in realism. This does not mean repeating the outcomes of actual history. Rather, it requires a high level of knowledge and awareness of the real material conditions in Cuba during the rebellion when crafting directives and crisis arcs. Be creative, be intelligent, but be realistic.

Our committee's time-freeze will begin in 1956, after the Granma Landing attack by Castro's rebels. This means that you are expected to be well-researched on the history of everything that happened before then. However, everything that happened after that point will be shaped by the directives you write, the choices you make, and the direction that the committee wants to take the arc of history in. I, the chair, will be acting in the role of Commander-in-chief Fidel Castro, while delegates will be allotted personalities of various key figures within the revolution. Each personality will be a real historical figure from the Cuban revolution and will have a certain role or portfolio under them which will grant them certain formal powers. They can use these powers when writing directives.

Delegates are expected to be familiar with the basics and norms of crisis committees before applying for this committee. It is recommended that delegates read the "Ad Hoc Guide" published for LUMUN XX to read sample directives and understand

the level of crisis expected from them. Mistakes will not be judged lightly in this year's crisis committee and the margin for error will be slim.

Scribbling away at a notepad and empty theatrics are not enough. Delegates are expected to display strategy, cunning and ruthlessness. A good directive is one written with a strategy or goal in mind. Most importantly, this is still an MUN committee. You will be expected to unmod, collaborate, and manoeuvre amongst your fellow delegates and still come out ahead. Crisis delegates must be strong negotiators. This is a small committee where each personality has their own conflicting goals and agendas. You should be adept at convincing others to do what's in your best interest, while making them think that that's what is in their best interest. Crisis is a game of who breaks first. Learn to effectively use all the tools at your disposal.

Remember: within Cuba, everyone's out for blood and everyone's in it for themselves. Be cunning, be strategic, be ruthless. And know that Castro will not be merciful or forgiving.

Best,

Naheel Malik

Chair | Crisis Director

Castro's Revolutionary Cabinet

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Yumna Javed

Having read the premise of the crisis, you are expected to have the basic maestro of the crisis at your fingertips. In this fast-paced crisis, one of the significant things advised to comrades of the Cuban Revolution is not to have any preconceived notions or predictions of how the crisis will roll out. The nature of the crisis often leads to your plans being deterred, and sometimes, your strategy might fail to work.

You will encounter this at Castro's Cabinet, and thorough pre-planning will only get you so far. However, make your personality have specific goals you expect to reach by the end of a session or a day. You will be put through multiple tests, even deeming some of your resources useless in a particular situation. That said, crisis has the unique opportunity for you to create resources for yourself but only within the bounds of realism and specific to your personality, which this entire crisis will be based upon.

Another important thing is to realize how to perform excellently in a crisis unmod. Private directives, while essential, won't suffice in making you win the committee. Figure out how your personality should gauge an unmod and what should come out of it.

Lastly, while the time freeze happens at Granma landing, don't limit yourself to that benchmark. You can either alter history or stick to your persona, but remember, it is a power struggle in a volatile Cuba. Be creative and smart, and most importantly, be ruthless, as your persona needs to excel in

Castro's circle. Any small mistakes or progress in your course of crisis will all be accounted for and judged critically.

Godspeed,

Yumna Javed Malik

Chair | Crisis Director

Castro's Revolutionary Cabinet

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Background and Batista's rise to power:

There have been many rulers in Cuba, yet Batista is the one that many remember for his democratic and tyrannical rule. He was a Cuban military leader and politician who rose to power twice despite the humble background he came from. Initially, Batista worked various jobs until he enlisted in the Cuban army where he maintained his reputation and became a stenographer. As a result of his ability to gain favour with the political elites, he quickly rose through the ranks and was eventually made sergeant in 1928.

In April 1933, US Ambassador Benjamin Sumner Welles was sent to Cuba to mediate conflicts between the government and opposing political factions. During this time, he met Batista, seeing him as the only person who actually had some sense of authority. This encouraged Batista to manipulate Cuban

politics and attain power which resulted in America's eventual recognition of Cuba's new government.

As a sergeant himself, Batista organised the "Sergeant's Revolt," in which he led non-commissioned officers and enlisted men in the military to overthrow the provincial regime that maintained an authoritarian rule. His strategic alliances with student unions, including the influential Revolutionary Directorate, garnered significant support, effectively putting him in a position where he was ruling the country. While Ramón Grau San Martín assumed the presidency, Batista, as Army Chief of Staff, retained substantial control over the government, becoming the most powerful figure in Cuban politics.

Initially, Batista went through a populist period, with the support of the army and police playing a major role in his rise to power.

He knew that to attain this power, he needed to appeal to the people as well as the revolutionary sentiments of 1933. Unlike most of the oligarchy, he recognised labour relations as a political problem and used it to his advantage. The central government officials had left Batista in charge of the sugar industry because they believed that an army led by an uneducated former sergeant wouldn't be able to handle the ongoing issue. However, this role gave Batista control over the labour force which allowed him to position himself as a mediator of the working class and build political alliances with labour unions. The sugar industry in Cuba was a key export to the United States and with Batista's control over the industry, his position was leveraged as the US depended on him and had to tolerate him due to their reliance.

Moving forward, Batista spent a couple of years cultivating support and forging strategic alliances like with the Communist Party to reduce their ability to oppose him and improve his image abroad. He also introduced the 1940 Constitution which demanded for the rights of urban and rural labour, initiated social welfare programs, etc. He further portrayed himself as a leader who could understand the problems that a lot of Cubans went through as he too was excluded from the upper class due to his heritage and modest origins. Additionally, he only kept those people in power whom he could control. His manipulative techniques allowed him to control these puppets and dominate Cuban politics behind the scenes. Batista maintained this control by relying on a patronage system in which he would reward those who were loyal to him through job recruitments, privileges and huge amounts of money instead of resorting to violence.

However, his relationship with his former allies, particularly student groups, ended over time. He broke with these organizations, including the Revolutionary Directorate, which subsequently became his strongest enemies. Yet, the transition from a military dictatorship to a nominal constitutional democracy in 1940 was observed as a significant moment in Cuba's history.

Batista's Regime:

Unlike other leaders, Batista became President twice, with the first one being in 1940. He ran for elections after garnering support through the proposition of appealing themes that allowed him to win majority votes in the Congress. Moreover, he collaborated with the Communist Party in Cuba which benefitted both parties and helped him gain further

support. As a result, he served a four-year term as the President of Cuba, becoming the first and only coloured person in Cuba to achieve this.

During his first presidency, Cuba started diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union and officially joined the Allies in World War II. In addition, Batista introduced a number of policies regarding labour rights, education and healthcare which helped advance the social welfare in the country. Even though he was corrupt and increased his wealth, he still worked to improve the economic conditions of his country.

After his term ended, he retired from politics and relocated to Florida, investing a portion of the substantial wealth he had amassed in Cuba. During the eight years he was absent from power in Cuba,

corruption resurged on a large scale.

In 1952, Batista returned to power through a military coup but this time his rule was completely authoritarian unlike his earlier populist presidency. He overthrew the democratically elected president and justified it by saying that it was necessary to prevent political instability. He had become a dictator, ruling Cuba in the complete opposite way than he had done his first time. While he was initially allying with student unions, he now began controlling the university and press, disallowing free speech. He embezzled huge sums of money, taking advantage of the soaring economy. The rich became richer, and the poor fell into extreme poverty. The elections were also rigged in attempts to make him the sole candidate for the presidential position.

To further add to this, he revoked the 1940 constitution, disbanded the legislature, and ruled by decree. The corruption heightened which Batista himself became part of. Batista maintained a close relationship with US and fostered the foreigners' business interests. U.S. companies maintained significant investments in Cuba, particularly in the sugar, tobacco, and mining industries, granting them substantial control over the Cuban economy. Eventually, Batista even transformed Cuba into a foreign tax base country which prevented the US from paying Cuban taxes. It was the implementation of the Platt Amendment after the Spanish American war that allowed US to intervene legally in Cuba's affairs under certain circumstances. Cuba also continued to give strong support to US to prevent the spread of

communism and due to the Cold War dynamics.

Furthermore, Batista relied heavily on the military and secret police, using them as a tool to maintain control with the assistance of weapons provided by US as well as their intelligence system. Batista's political opponents faced brutal repression and terror tactics were utilised to preserve control. This was completely against the patronage system he maintained in his first term. However, just as he would control his puppets in Cuba, he himself was a puppet for the US as they only supported him due to the belief that he was a stronghold against the spread of communism in Latin America. Nevertheless, after the Cuban Revolution unfolded and Batista was overthrown, the diplomatic relations between Cuba and US completely changed.

History of the Revolution

The Early Stages of the Cuban Revolution:

Early phases of the Cuban Revolution: In 1952, Fulgencio Batista, a former president and military leader, staged a military coup that overthrew the democratically elected government and placed elections on indefinite pause. Batista's rule was characterised by corruption, repression of the opposition, and subservience to American economic interests, especially in the sugar industry. This anti-American mentality sprang from the inequalities the sugar cartels generated under his reign, particularly among the lower and middle classes. In addition, 85% of Cuba's land was held by foreigners, and unemployment rates, especially in rural regions, surged.

Such disparities in inequalities stemmed past all sectors, where Cuba had **1.5 doctors per 1,000 people**. Its education sector was in slums and the access to education particularly in rural areas was very difficult. It had over 1000 political prisoners who did not receive a fair and equal trail. Therefore, the Batista regime was under fire for human rights violations as well.

Therefore, in this time demonstrations against Batista were led by students, workers, and middle-class residents opened the door for revolutionary groups. One of the few born of such tumultuous political conditions was Fidel Castro, advocating for radical socialist economic and politic. He became the one who was one of the few to start organising grassroots opposition parties and advocating for social and economic reforms, as well as

being an one of the key revolutionaries to overthrow Batista's government.

Moncada Barracks Attack (July 26, 1953)

The Moncada Barracks attack on **July 26, 1953**, was a pivotal moment in the early stages of the Cuban Revolution. While the attack was a massive failure with no tangible victory in terms of volume. It transpired as a symbolic victory, one of morals that echoed positively through the masses. It also initiated Castro's ideas becoming the hallmark for the revolution.

Castro's plan centred on seizing the Moncada Barracks to acquire arms and ammunition for the revolutionaries' arsenal. However, the plan was risky: Approximately 160 insurgents participated in the attack, including Castro's brother Raúl Castro. The rebels planned to disguise

themselves in stolen army uniforms in order to enter the barracks. A simultaneous diversionary attack on a smaller outpost in nearby Bayamo was supposed to confuse Batista's men. The ultimate goal was to incite a national insurrection by organising the Cuban people against Batista's regime. Since military vigilance was thought to be low over Carnival weekend, with the populace busy in celebration they had intended to strike and make a strong move over the barracks. And when morning came on July 26, 1953, the rebels launched their assault. Due to a series of poor decisions and logistical issues killed the expedition: The convoy of rebel trucks broke apart leading to confusion in the ranks. The barracks's security caught on to the attack quickly, with loaded ammunition they opened fire on Castro's men and with the

lack of skills and training, they were defeated in a humiliating full scale attack. Several fighters were killed during the assault, but many guerrillas, including Fidel and Raúl Castro, were captured in the days after the attack and carried for investigation.

During this attack, it was among the prominent casualties, one of whom were significant revolutionaries such as Carlos Rodríguez and Abel Santamaría.

The event was dealt with historic brutality by Batista's Regime. Where political activists like Abel Santamaría, eyes were supposedly gouged out before his death. Similarly, Batista's regime called for extreme tortures against the political activists involved in Moncada Barracks. By the end of the fateful day, Castro and his few right hand men were arrested and put on

trial for treason against his own country. These trials received global media attention and actually helped rally Castro's cause louder to both his Cuban and international audience. This became a turning point in his career, while the state was in an effort to discredit him his popularity was growing. It was during this time his defence, "History Will Absolve Me", he speaks of Batista's atrocities to the international audience which gained increasing popularity.

Arrest and Expulsion to Mexico (1955)

The aftermath to Moncada Barracks:

The exile of 1955 began with the failed raid on Moncada Barracks on July 26, 1953. After surviving the raid, Fidel Castro and the other rebels were on trials instigating revolutionary propaganda against the state. Castro outlined his plans for

a Cuba free from Batista's rule in his famous speech, "History Will Absolve Me." His agenda was one that would put a strong focus on land reform, industrialisation, and wealth redistribution. After being sentenced to 15 years in prison, Fidel Castro and his brother Raúl Castro were placed in custody at the Isle of Pines Prison.

Growing pressure from the international community forced Batista to proclaim amnesty for political prisoners, including Fidel and Raúl Castro, by 1955. This emphasis by the international community also led to a wave of mobilisation of student organisations, trade unions, and civic associations. These empowered bodies started to call for liberation of political prisoners whose political freedoms had been restricted by Batista's dictatorial regime.

Upon realising the lack of opportunity to plan and execute a revolution within the bounds of Cuba, Castro fled the country with a few close confidants including, Fidel, Raúl, travelling to Mexico City and established a base of operation. The strategic location of Mexico of being beyond Batista's jurisdiction was the reason for it being the safe haven for the exiled.

Castro formally established the 26th of July Movement (Movimiento 26 de Julio) in Mexico after the abortive Moncada attempt. This was historic and the group that came out of it was the locus of the revolution which grew exponentially. This period is traced back by historians for its significance to the entire movement, where the ideological fervour and military discipline combined instigated a revolution in Cuba.

Student Insurgencies in Cuba

During Fidel's absence, student resistance to Batista's power strengthened, especially between 1953 and 1955. The Directorate of Revolutionary Students (DER) and the Federation of University Students (FEU) were few of the significant unions that became active against his dictatorial methods. Student activists included;

1. José Antonio Echeverría: President of the FEU, who led the March 13, 1957, attack on Batista's presidential palace in an attempt to assassinate him.

2. Frank País: A schoolteacher who became the chief of action for the 26th of July Movement in Santiago de Cuba. He played a critical role in coordinating urban

resistance and guerrilla activities.

3. Julio Díaz: A prominent student leader known for rallying university protests.

Return from Mexico & the Granma Attack

The Granma Expedition and subsequent guerrilla warfare was the shift that moved the revolutionary war into a military campaign.

The Granma Expedition: Genesis of Revolutionary Action

The mission started on November 25, 1956, when Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Che Guevara, and eighty revolutionaries sailed from Tuxpan, Mexico, aboard a small yacht known as Granma. The boat was overloaded by twice the amount of supplies, weapons, and fighters. While meant to accommodate only 12 people, it was severely overstated, this also meant

that Castro and his companions were not comfortable during this journey either. Out of 80, many fell sick during this time and couldn't survive the journey. When the expedition was delayed, its strategic timing was jeopardised because it was originally planned as a synchronised strike to coincide with the upheavals in Cuba.

The journey was 82 hours long and was one that was far from over. The boat came to shore, in the Playa Las Coloradas area off the southeast coast of Cuba, on December 2, 1956. The landing was one in dangerous waters and as soon as the boat came to a standstill- they were ambushed.

Landing and Survival of the Revolution:

After learning of their whereabouts leaked within the revolutionaries, Batista's troops ambushed the group as

they reached the shore. The subsequent Battle of Alegría de Pío, fought in a harsh, marshy setting, saw a significant defeat for the insurgents. Out of the 82 who had set sail, just 12 warriors survived, including key commanders like Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Che Guevara, and Camilo Cienfuegos. The survivors managed to escape into the Sierra Maestra mountains with little more than their convictions and a determination to resist.

The failed landing was a turning moment in the revolution, not its end. The image of the disorganised team escaping into the mountains captured the attention of Cubans, who saw it as a symbol of their resilience against Batista's oppressive regime.

The Revolution after the Granma Landing 1956-1959:

After the Granma Landing and subsequent battle, Castro's rebels fled and regrouped, joined by other revolutionaries that were spurred into action by their courage. Castro's rebels gathered together and

Batista, threatened by the rebels, sought to retaliate and subsequently

Strategies and Tactics

The organization utilized its stronghold in the Escambray mountains for guerilla attacks. It employed strategies of ambushes, raids, and disruptions along transport routes against the Batista forces. In terms of armed struggle, they operated in a way similar to the 26th of July Movement. Both these movements utilised the complex geography of Cuba's mountains to counter the Batista forces; Castro's forces operated in Sierra Maestra while SNFE in Escambray. They formed the 'second front' to the struggle, complementing Castro's movement. The organizations' independent attacks thinned the Cuban Army. The army was forced to spread out to fight these movements on multiple fronts simultaneously. This proved to be mutually beneficial for both the organizations.

Political Organizations

Second National Front of the Escambray

The SNFE was a revolutionary organization established in November 1957 to counter Batista's dictatorship. The organization was headed by Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo who was a Spanish-born Cuban. It was named after the Escambray mountains range which is 150 miles from Havana. The organization and its activities were concentrated in Central Cuba, mainly in the mountains of Escambray.

Growth and Recruitment

The front experienced exponential growth with recruitments from universities and non-Communist parties. The movement eventually grew to an army of 3000 personnel. The personnel belonged to diverse backgrounds and gave the SNFE credibility as a movement. The movement also gained international traction after the inclusion of an American William Morgan in its ranks. William Morgan was a commander in SNFE and believed in the SNFE's freedom struggle, despite later being penalised by the United States. This garnered support for SNFE's cause as its ideals resonated with people across borders.

Revolutionary Directorate of March 13 (RD)

In 1956 the Federación Estudiantil Universitaria (University Student Federation) founded the RD movement. The movement proved to be vital in the revolution

against Fulgencio Batista. The movement was marked by the membership of students and intellectuals who were committed to the cause. José Antonio Echeverría, a charismatic student leader, spearheaded the organization. Echeverría was the president of the University Student Federation and propagated principles of justice and democracy among his peers. His belief in necessary radical change to oust Batista gave purpose to the organization.

Ideologies and strategies

The organization exhibited a pro-nationalist ideology. It emphasized the need to safeguard the sovereignty of the Cuban people from all exploitative foreign influences. Owing to the treatment of the Cuban People under the Batista Regime, the organization adopted principles of social justice and self-determination.

Their main goals included:

- Restoration of the 1940 Constitution
- Curbing the socio-economic disparities caused by foreign influences
- Disestablishment of the Batista Regime

Due to the US-Cuban economic and political ties, the RD viewed the regime as complicit in propagating U.S. neo-colonialism. RD had a strong anti-US stance, especially due to the US influence on the Batista regime. The US influence during the Batista regime was not limited to politics but also extended to Cuba's economy. American companies and corporations had a monopoly on major industries including utilities, sugar, and infrastructure. Eventually, the monopoly reached a point where 70 percent of arable land was under the control of

foreigners and Americans.

These economic evolutions caused stagnation, widening the gap between the rich and the poor Cubans.

Naturally, the discontent was evident which was displayed through public protests. To counter any discontent and opposition, the regime censored the media and also employed the Bureau for Repression of Communist activities for executions, wide-scale violence, and torture. Repressive measures taken by the Batista Regime led to retaliation by the RD.

Urban Resistance and Tactics

The organization operated opposite to Castro's approach of guerrilla strategies being applied only in rural areas. RD went for a more direct, aggressive approach relying heavily on sabotaging the current regime and conducting bombings in major cities especially Havana.

RD mainly tried to disrupt Batista's administrative and military logistics by targeted bombings of infrastructure, including power stations, roads, rails, and government buildings. Widespread bombing in urban areas created fear among government officials. These bombings undermined people's belief in the Batista regime's ability to maintain order and ensure public safety. The movement employed successful propaganda campaigns against the regime through the distribution of leaflets and radio broadcasts that disseminated anti-regime messages focusing on exposing corruption and repression done by the Batista regime. This fostered an anti-regime narrative while growing resistance. This not only encouraged RD's activities but also led to the recruitment of students and workers to join their ranks

and fight against Batista. Urban sabotage also led to the regime focusing most of its resources on securing urban areas.

RD led to a dual-front revolution, complementing Castro's effort in the rural areas. Batista was forced to divide his forces between urban and rural areas. This ultimately weakened Batista's capacity to suppress Castro's guerrillas.

26th of July Movement

The 26th of July movement was a revolutionary movement spearheaded by Fidel Castro. Alongside him, he had the support of Raul Castro, Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos, and Frank País. It opposed the widespread corruption, political suppression, and inequality under the dictatorship of Batista. The movement was named after the Moncada Barracks attack of 1953.

Despite failing, the attack culminated in the beginning of Castro's revolutionary activities.

Connections to Revolutionary Movements

After the failed attacks on the Moncada Barracks, Castro grouped the fragmented revolutionary organizations. He focused on establishing connections with other revolutionaries who were also in exile. During his time in Mexico, he met Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Ernesto was an Argentine Marxist revolutionary and a physician. Guevara was committed to his anti-imperialist ideologies which were common ground between him and Castro. Guevara had an extensive knowledge of guerilla warfare which aided Castro in his resistance to the Batista Regime.

Alongside Castro, his brother Raúl Castro was invaluable to him in creating

a revolutionary network. He established a network with leftist revolutionary groups which included the Communist Party of Cuba. Moreover, Raul's connections to socialist movements garnered ideological support for the movement. The network established while in exile helped the movement through resources, support, and sympathizers.

The movement was also strengthened by the inclusion of the militant leaders, Frank País, and Camilo Cienfuegos whose expertise aided the armed front of the movement. Frank País was a teacher and a revolutionary who led the urban resistance in Santiago de Cuba. Frank's ability to organize attacks in the urban areas complemented Castro's struggle through rural guerilla warfare. Cienfuegos was also a charismatic guerilla commander whose

extensive knowledge aided
Castro in the Sierra Maestra.

with land and a stake in
the economy.

Initial Aims of the Movement

Political Liberation:

The movement wanted the 1940 Constitution to be re-established. The Batista regime revoked the Constitution in 1952. Its revocation compromised the Cuban People's democratic right to universal suffrage, civil liberties, and labor rights. The movement wanted a representative government as per the Constitution.

Economic Reforms:

1. Land Distribution: Under the Batista regime, foreigners and American Corporations controlled the majority of the arable lands which marginalized the rural farmers. To address these inequalities, the movement aimed for redistribution mechanisms that would provide rural farmers

2. Workers' rights: The movement promised better working conditions for workers, including better wages and benefits. Strengthening of Worker Unions was also incentivized to give workers a centralized platform to advocate for their rights.

3. Nationalization: Due to the increased control of American Corporations on the industries, the movement wanted to nationalize all such industries which would allow capital to be used in the interest of the Cuban People.

4. Reformation of Tax Laws: Aimed to apply policies of income redistribution to counter the concentration of wealth with only the elites. Laws that would uphold equity of tax

application would be enforced.

Guerilla Tactics

Following the Granma Landing, the 26th of July movement concentrated all their activities around the Sierra Maestra mountains, establishing it as a base. The dense forests of the mountain provided the ideal environment for their guerilla operations. Moreover, their movement patterns made use of the terrain, allowing them to launch hit-and-runs, sabotage operations, and ambushes on the Batista forces. Their small mobile units overwhelmed the Cuban army which operated on conventional war tactics. This allowed the Castro movement to make up for their numbers in technique.

Local Support and Revolutionary Ideals

Apart from the military strategies, Castro's movement

focused on their relationships with the locals of Sierra Maestra. Through their behavior and respect towards the locals, they were able to gain their support which immensely aided their operations. They incentivized land distribution, providing native farmers with lands. Furthermore, they provided medical aid and protection to the locals. Their goodwill ensured a regular supply of resources from them.

Political and economic structure of Cuba

Cuban Economy

The Cuban economy, though one of the leading economies in Latin America, is characterized by a blend of underdevelopment, inequality, and external dependence. The technological lags and lack of industrialization leave exports of agricultural

products, tourism, and gambling the primary sources of income for the Cuban economy. Cuba is currently one of the world's largest sugar producers, with a large portion of its economy dependent on the export of sugar to the United States and other foreign markets. Sugar exports account for almost 80% of Cuba's total exports. Other agricultural products produced in Cuba include tobacco, coffee and citrus fruits. History has shown that the Cuban economy's performance is highly reliant on the global sugar market, as the economy booms and busts with the rise and fall of global sugar prices. Hence, this creates a lot of economic instability for the Cuban economy.

Most of Cuba's wealth is controlled by the US and other foreign investors, who own the majority percentage of arable land and essential services, and also control

almost half of its sugar production. The United States is also Cuba's primary trading partner, as it receives 75% of Cuba's exports and supplies 70% of its imports. The economy is highly dependent upon the US and is vulnerable to any policy changes that it makes. This high level of dependence translated to catering of interests for the US corporations operating in Cuba. This creates resentment amongst Cubans who feel that they are being exploited by foreign interests. There are high inequalities in income in Cuba, as Urban centers benefit from modern infrastructure and a lively tourism industry that caters mainly to America. On the other hand, rural areas are extremely underdeveloped, with the lower class working on agriculture products. These rural workers only earn during the harvest season, and are unemployed throughout the rest of the year, living

in extreme poverty. Rural areas also suffer from a lack of social services and education.

Corruption is rampant in these industries as Batista's government colluded with foreign corporations, allowing them to maintain their monopolies over their trade in exchange for pay-outs. Despite the high amount of wealth generated through these foreign-owned industries, the ineffective taxation system has ensured that little to none of this income is reinvested to improve Cuba's infrastructure. The tourism and gambling industry on the other hand, is controlled by mafias as Batista has allowed Organized Crime to exploit and control this industry in exchange for bribes. Hence, the annual income, though remarkably high up the ranks in Latin America, has enriched only a few Cubans with ties to the government

or foreign business corporations. This high level of corruption and income disparity is a vital factor that fuels the rebellion.

Cuban Political Structure

About three months before the 1952 elections, Fulgencio Batista rose to power after ousting President Carlos Socarras. Due to rampant corruption and manipulative democratic institutions, Batista, with his military background, was able to overthrow the government of President Carlos, with the support of the armed forces. This coup was a marking point of a shift to authoritarianism as Batista dissolved the Cuban Congress and suspended the 1940 constitution, which would otherwise have enriched civil liberties. Batista, now president, held the highest office in the Cuban government, where military intervention undermines

democracy. Batista has implemented repressive measures against any opposition to his regime. Political freedoms such as freedom of speech, the press, and the assembly were all severely restricted, and opposition figures either arrested, tortured, or killed. Batista relied on the army and the police to maintain order in his government. The judiciary was also practically ineffective, as it was influenced by political leaders and elites, with judges being easily swayed with bribes and political pressure.

The ministries in the government acted as tools to the regime, serving to enforce Batista's control rather than governing effectively or providing support to the public. The ministries of Interior and Defence, though existing, were riddled with corruption with officials involved in

embezzlement for their personal gain. Batista's government was notorious for its corruption at the highest levels. Batista and his loyalists embezzled public funds and allowed foreign businesses and crime organisations to operate freely in Cuba, in exchange for bribes. Batista also supported American Business interests, particularly by offering them favourable terms in Cuba's sugar trade, and tourism and gambling industries. This has allowed him to maintain his financial backing and international legitimacy. The US government also viewed Batista as an enemy of communism and provided him with the financial and military support to maintain his regime. The manipulation of elections also allowed Batista to maintain power throughout his regime.

Prominent oppositions to Batista's regime were the

Cuban revolutionaries, the most prominent of which was Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement. Castro's group advocated for the overthrow of Batista's dictatorship and the restoration of the 1940 constitution, along with the nationalization of the foreign owned industries, and social justice. The goals of the revolutionaries that favoured the poor Cuban majority, coupled with the brutality of Batista's rule allowed the revolutionaries to gain popularity and stir actions against Batista's regime. A very prominent show of support was the formation of the Federation of University Students (FEU), an anti-government group that mobilized opposition to the regime through protests. The Granma Landing now holds significance for initiating the guerilla opposition against Batista's government.

Cuba geography and terrain

Cuba is a long and narrow island in the Caribbean Sea, stretching approximately 750 miles in length and is wide by no more than 60 miles in most places. Cuba is surrounded by groups of smaller islands that make up the Greater Antilles. The island is positioned along the key maritime routes in the Gulf of Mexico, hence enhancing its strategic importance. The country's terrain is mostly lowland plains used for agriculture, whereas the southeast of the island is covered by the high Sierra Maestra mountains, and rolling hills. The rugged deep valleys and dense forests of the Sierra Maestra mountains provided a fortress for revolutionaries, allowing them to avoid detection and carry out hit-and-run attacks. Havana, the capital and the largest city in Cuba, is the political and economic

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centre of Cuba and the hub of foreign business interest.

Havana holds strategic importance as control over Havana symbolizes control over the country, as it is the seat of Batista's government. Havana has a modern harbour and several road and rail links connecting it to other major cities such as Santiago de Cuba, Santa Clara, and Bayamo. The Central Highway is the primary road running the length of the island, with extensions connecting to all major cities. Surrounding neighbouring countries such as Mexico, West Florida, Haiti, and Jamaica are all within a 100-mile radius from Cuba.

Military Capabilities during the Cuban Revolution

The Cuban Army, first established in 1868, served with the Allies in World Wars I and II, and was supported by the United States. The army has had a significant role in maintaining power during Batista's regime. The Cuban army's strength amounts to almost 25000-30000 soldiers including army units, police, and paramilitary groups. Batista also has a network of secret police tasked with gathering intelligence through informants and radio surveillance. The Cuban Army

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is relatively well-equipped with US standard issue automatic weapons including the latest generation M1 Garand rifles, field artillery which is particularly useful in the mountains, and armoured vehicles, including M4 Sherman tanks. The Cuban Air force has a small fleet of aircrafts which consists of fighter jets and light bombers, that are used to provide air support during military operations and bomb rebel strongholds. The Cuban Army, though well-trained in conventional warfare, has less experience with the guerrilla warfare tactics employed by the rebels, and is vulnerable to corruption and desertions.

The rebels, having suffered a significant loss after the deaths in the Granma Landing, are concentrated within the Sierra Maestra mountains. The rebels mainly rely on

captured government weapons to arm their rebellion, having mainly bolt-action rifles and few automatic weapons. The rebels don't have access to any heavy artillery or aircrafts. The rebels use their radio station, "Radio Rebelde", to spread their propaganda and communicate with their sympathizers throughout Cuba. The rebels rely heavily for information on their network of informants in rural areas, the Cuban army, and the government. These sympathizers inform the rebels of military plans and movements throughout Cuba. The rebels are skilled in guerrilla warfare tactics, using stealth and the element of surprise to carry out successful attacks. Using the Sierra Maestra mountains as their stronghold allows them to limit the effectiveness of Batista's army and launch ambushes and hit-and-run attacks.

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